



FAQ: Private Lead Service Line Replacement Program

Am I eligible to replace my private water service for free?

You must meet two conditions to be eligible: First, your private water service piping must be made of either lead or galvanized iron.

Second, one of the following must be true: (a) you must own a home in the area of an active public water main project; (b) your private service is leaking or failing; (c) you were chosen by the Utility's lottery system to participate in the program.

In order to qualify for the lottery system, the public portion (that portion in the street) of your water service must already be copper. The Utility maintains detailed records on public service materials, so you do not need to contact the Utility in order to be entered into the lottery system.

Funding will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, and there should be enough funds to replace several hundred private lead services per year, over the next several years.

Residents in areas of public water service replacement projects, and residents with leaking or failing services, will be given higher priority. Other eligible residents, those chosen by the lottery system, will be given lower priority.

At this time, the program is only open to those properties that are residential in nature and owned by an individual. In most cases, a business, LLC, or commercially owned property will not qualify.

How do I know if my private water service is made of lead or galvanized iron?



If your home was built before the early 1940's there is a good chance your private piping is lead or galvanized iron. You may visit bit.ly/racinewater for the most up-to-date data on your pipe material. If your property displays no information on the website, the best way to determine the material of your private water service is to hire a plumber to inspect it for you. Plumbers will often do this for free. You may also consider texting or emailing a photo of where the water pipe enters your home in your basement to **262-497-4611** or chad.regalia@cityofracine.org. You could also contact the Utility at **262-636-9533** to request an inspection; our ability to respond in a timely manner will depend on our seasonal workload and the volume of requests received. If your home was built in the mid-1940s or later, odds are that both your private portion and public portion are already copper.

How do I know if I am in the area of a public water service replacement project?

The Water Utility will deliver construction notices to residents ahead of any public water service replacement projects. Notices are typically delivered a few weeks before the start of construction.

How do I know if my water service is leaking or at great risk of failing?

The Utility will note any poor piping as they replace water meters throughout the area. Plumbers will also inform the Utility if they notice that a private water service is in really poor shape.

How does the Lottery work?

The Utility compiled a list of several thousand homes where the public water pipe was already replaced with copper. From this list, a random drawing of homes was performed, and owners of those properties were then mailed a notice of eligibility into the program.

How do I know if there is still funding available?

If you are in the area of a public lead replacement project, or if your service is leaking, there is a very good chance that funding has been set aside for you. Once you pick a plumber and deliver the “Addendum to Contract” form, the Utility can then verify with your plumber that funding is available. Plumbers were supplied copies of the Addendum form.

If you were chosen as part of the lottery system, the Utility will notify your plumber regarding funding as soon as the Addendum form is delivered to the Utility.

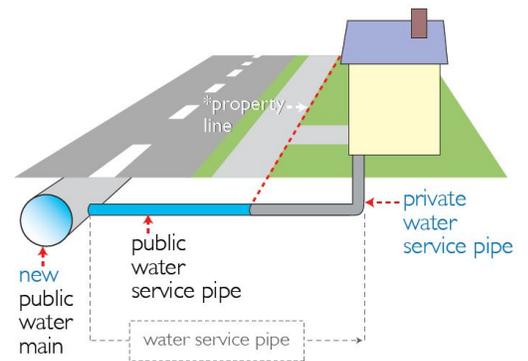
What if my private water service is lead, but the public portion in the street is also lead? Why can't I have my lead service line replaced for free?

The public health risk is higher for those “partial” lead services in which there are both lead and copper pipes compared with a service made completely of lead. Therefore, those properties must be prioritized for funding.

Eventually the Utility will replace all public lead services, at which time you will be notified so that you can make a plan to replace your private service. You may also consider self-financing your private lead service line replacement at any time, which would trigger the Utility to subsequently replace your public service.

If the Utility is performing public water service replacements, how much of my water service tubing will the Water Utility replace? What portion of the service is my responsibility?

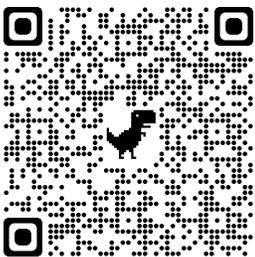
The Utility owns and maintains the water service from the water main in the street to the curb stop valve, which is typically located near the sidewalk. If this public portion is lead, and the Utility is doing work in the road, the Utility will replace this section with new copper tubing and will also install a new curb stop valve.



The remaining portion of the service, from the curb stop valve to the meter in the building, is the private portion of the water service and is owned by the property owner.

I'm eligible for the program, what's the next step?

The next step is to pick a plumber. You should call several plumbers and obtain quotes for the work to get the best price, keeping in mind that excessively high quotes will not be covered fully by the Utility. You should also discuss any details or concerns with the plumbers. You should, at the very least, discuss just what sort of restoration they will perform in the yard and sidewalk, and what sort of work will be performed in the basement.



Your plumber must first prequalify with the Utility before performing the work. The Utility hosts a list of prequalified plumbers (and Addendum forms) at:

<http://cityofracine.org/Water/ServiceLateralRebateProgram/>

You can use a plumber who is not on the list, but they must first prequalify with the Utility before starting any work.

How much of my front yard will be dug up?

Some plumbers might opt to dig a trench across the entire front yard, while others might opt to dig two holes (one near the side of the home and one near the sidewalk) and use a less disruptive method. You should discuss with your plumber how much of the yard will be excavated and how much restoration work will be included in the quote.

Okay, so I've picked a plumber and would like to move forward with the replacement. What's next? You should review your quote from the plumber to ensure everything is in order. Then you and your plumber should both then sign the "Addendum To Contract" form and deliver it to the Utility before starting any work. The plumber will often deliver the form for you. Once that's done, the rest is up to your plumber. They will handle the permitting and inspection process, and will coordinate the work with the Utility.

Bear in mind that you are hiring the plumber, and the plumber is working for you, not the Utility.

How does the plumber get paid?

The Utility will make direct payment to your plumber. Any additional amount over the Utility cap will be the responsibility of the homeowner. In some cases the cost to restore the front yard or sidewalk will be an extra cost, and that cost will be your responsibility.

The City of Racine has also begun a low-interest loan program to help cover those additional costs over the program cap. Please contact the City of Racine at 262-636-9280 for more information on the loan program.

Does my new pipe have to be copper? Can it be plastic instead?

The private portion can be plastic or copper. However, many older homes have their electrical system grounded to the water service, and a plastic service cannot be used as a ground. In these cases, it is better to use copper. This is an issue to discuss with your plumber.

The plumber didn't do a good job restoring my front yard, or didn't replace the sidewalk square he had to take out. What do I do now?

Review your plumber's quote to see if that work was included in his price, and then call your plumber to address these concerns. Generally, the Utility will not withhold payment to a plumber, unless it can be proven that the plumber didn't perform all the work included in their quote.

The plumbers on the list are all too busy. Do I have any other options?

You can try calling other plumbers who are not on the list, even outside the city of Racine. You could also try calling any construction companies or contractors who perform underground utility work to see if they'd be interested in replacing your service.

If you end up choosing a company not on the City's list, just make sure that they first prequalify with the Utility before performing any work.



← For more information about the Racine Water Utility's Private Lead Service Line Replacement Program, please visit the website:

<https://www.cityofracine.org/Water/ServiceLateralRebateProgram/>